THE MOST WIDELY HEARD AMPHIBIAN VOICE.—Identification by voice has long been recognized as an integral part of bird study, but those who have learned to identify amphibian calls still form a relatively small and select band of naturalists. Parenthetically, we may say that there is as much thrill in hearing the far-off nasal *quonk-quonk, quonk* of *Hyla andersoni* through the cedar swamps, or the rarely heard trill of *Bufo californicus* in a nearby arroyo, as there ever was in tracking down the call of the pileated woodpecker.

However, the mosquito-bitten trailers of amphibian songs have failed to note a most curious recent geographical extension of the range of one frog voice. Within the last twenty years, the call of one species of amphibian has become familiar to the ears of at least half the human race! I think this remarkable range extension to be worthy of herpetological attention.

Seated in a cinema theater in Stockholm, Bombay, Auckland, or a village in Mato Grosso, we watch the hero crawling through the snake-infested jungles of Borneo. It is dark, a tropic moon reflects on the river, and the night noises are heard distinctly. Suddenly we hear the sharp *rurrkk-uk, rurrkk-uk, rurrkk-uk* of the Pacific tree frog, our old friend *Hyla regilla,* and the whole illusion so carefully built up by Hollywood is shattered.

Fully half the night scenes in Hollywood sound movies, be the supposed setting Boston, Brazil, or Ujiji, bear the unmistakable voice of the commonest of California frogs. The average listener takes it for an insect song, and a herpetologist, if he were not familiar with Pacific Coast frog calls, might mistake it for the voice of the northern swamp tree frog, *Pseudacris n. triseriata* (Schmidt, 1948, Sci. Mo., 67:447). When we realize that over half the people alive today, in all continents, have seen (and heard) sound movies from California, we can easily see why the call of *Hyla regilla* is, in truth, the most widely heard amphibian voice.—GEORGE S. MYERS, *Natural History Museum, Stanford University, Stanford, California.*

ASIATIC GIANT SALAMANDER CAUGHT IN THE SACRAMENTO RIVER, AND AN EXOTIC SKINK NEAR SAN FRANCISCO.—As means of transportation and numbers of people grow, it is inevitable that strange animals and plants will be introduced, and collected, with increasing frequency. Records of these are sufficiently interesting to publish, even though, as in the present instances, the information is not too exact.

In 1939 or 1940, I received a message to the effect that a Sacramento River commercial fisherman had caught a "strange" animal which he had alive in his apartment. The animal was a fine *Megalobatrachus* (unquestionably identified generically by its closed gill openings), in perfect condition, alive in a wooden trough suspended in the bathtub, where I handled and examined it carefully for about 30 minutes. It was between 25 and 30 inches in length. Its captor said he found it in one of his catfish traps, set in the Sacramento River, "below Sacramento but above the delta." Probably this was not far from Walnut Grove.

Unfortunately, I was unable to make a specific identification, for the Chinese *M. davidianus* was not adequately differentiated from the Japanese *M. japonicus* in the literature then available to me. Moreover, the creature exhibited coloration quite at variance not only with that of the several live Japanese examples I have seen, but also with published accounts of the color of Chinese specimens. The dorsum was a uniform dark brown, with an irregular sparse sprinkling over all the back of rather well defined dull yellow spots, these spots being of irregular outline and about one centimeter in diameter. There were no small spots, darker than the ground-color, which is the common color-pattern of all the examples of *Megalobatrachus* I have seen, and the ground-color was definitely brownish, not slaty gray. Also, it must be emphasized that there was nothing to indicate that the coloration was due to disease. The animal appeared to be in the very best of condition.

The source of the specimen is, of course, unknown. Its strange coloration even suggested the possibility of a native Californian *Megalobatrachus,* which would not be zoogeographically surprising, but no other captures have been reported. Giant salamanders are said to be kept alive in temples in China and there are many Chinese in

California. Escape of such an example is a possible explanation. Several years before the incident (in 1936 or 1937) a San Francisco firm which dealt in live frogs for biological laboratories advertised receipt of a consignment of live giant salamanders but I did not see their stock. Finally, it is possible that the specimen was never in the Sacramento River and that the fisherman's story was made up out of whole cloth. Certainly the muddy lower Sacramento is unlike the clear running water frequented by *Megalobatrachus,* but I see no reason why one of these animals could not survive in the Sacramento. Besides, circumstantial evidence pointed strongly to the truth of the fisherman's story.

Quite as strange was another such capture made while I was a student at Stanford, in 1930. The late Prof. James I. MacMurphy of the Botany Department, brought me a quite unexpected skink of large size (nearly 1 foot) and probable Australian affinity, caught the day before with his neighbor's help on a hill in the western outskirts of the town of San Mateo. The beast had a blue tongue, but was considerably rougher in squamation and duller in color than the common *Tiliqua scincoides,* with which I was familiar. However, it did not have the very rough scales and short tail of *Trachysaurus rugosus.* With my rudimentary knowledge of Australian herpetology, and Boulenger's "Catalogue of Lizards," the beast was identified as being close to the genus *Tiliqua.* As I was shortly to leave on a trip, I took the skink to the Steinhart Aquarium to be kept alive, and asked that it be given to Mr. J. R. Slevin, herpetologist of the California Academy, if it died. Upon my return, the animal had died and somebody had thrown it out, together with all hope of carefully identifying it. Prof. MacMurphy's neighbor told him that he had previously killed a lizard of the same size and kind as the one they later caught alive. Where the animals came from is unanswered. No others have been reported.—GEORGE S. MYERS, *Natural History Museum, Stanford University, Stanford, California.*

THE NUMBER OF YOUNG FOUND IN THE ISLAND NIGHT LIZARD.—During the course of experimental work, two gravid females of *Xantusia riversiana* Cope from a group collected on San Nicolas Island, California, in early September of 1950 were kept in the laboratory. After the birth of one young, which appeared normal in every respect, the parent lizard was sacrificed in an attempt to deliver any further offspring by surgical intervention. This procedure, part of a currently conducted research program, has been successful with many individuals of *X. vigilis.*

Two foetuses were found inside the parent, coiled up within their enveloping membranes, with their tails rolled under the gular areas. Even though these two additional young appeared to be at term, being as fully developed as their living sibling, they did not survive delivery. The snout-vent length of the normally delivered young was 33 mm., and the snout–vent lengths of the other two were 30 and 33 mm.

Surgery on the other gravid *X. riversiana* revealed four foetuses which, however, were still immature. They showed reflex convulsive movements when they were removed from the enveloping membranes, but since their integument apparently was not fully developed they suffered extensive water loss and did not survive. Their snout–vent lengths ranged from 25 to 27 mm.

These findings in *X. riversiana* are in marked contrast to the well-established fact that *X. vigilis* produces only one or two young per year (Cowles, 1944, COPEIA (2): 98–100; Miller, 1948, Univ. California Pub. Zool., 47: 197–224; Smith, 1946, Handbook of lizards). *Xantusia henshawi* is known to have one or two offspring each year; this was reported by Klauber (1926, COPEIA (152): 115–117) and was observed in our laboratory this September (1950) where one gravid *X. henshawi* isolated in a cage gave normal birth to two healthy young. Klauber (1931, Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist., 7(1): 1–16) also reported that *X. arizonae* gives birth to only one or two young.

Since both of the specimens of *X. riversiana* examined did produce more than two offspring, it would appear that the observed increase in number of siblings per female in this species of *Xantusia* over that in the three other species from the southwestern United States is not an anomaly. However, further data are necessary before definite conclusions can be drawn.—YOST U. AMREIN and MARGARET B. AMREIN, *Department of Zoology, University of California, Los Angeles, California.*